

2. (Once amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said operation means includes storage means for successively storing a plurality of signals at different timings obtained by the photoelectric conversion.

3. (Once amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said operation means executes a comparison operation for a combination of a plurality of ones of the signals stored in said storage means.

4. (Once amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the comparison operation includes an arithmetic operation for determining a maximum value or a minimum value of the signal.

5. (Once amended) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said outputting means outputs results of an arithmetic operation for each of the rows or the columns of said elements at a timing adjusted by said timing adjustment means.

6. (Twice amended) An image processing method for an image processing apparatus which has an optical area in which a plurality of elements are disposed in a matrix, comprising:

a light reception step of receiving light introduced into said elements of said optical area and photoelectrically converting the light;

an operation step of operating a plurality of signals in parallel obtained for each of said elements by the photoelectric conversion of the processing in the light reception step in accordance with a predetermined rule, the operation being based on at least one of clear signal and transfer signal;

an outputting step of receiving a result of the operation from the operation step and outputting the result of the operation step for each of said elements; and

a timing adjustment step of adjusting a timing at which the result of the operation is output for each of said plurality of elements by the processing in the outputting step, said timing adjustment step using a control signal other than the clear signal or the transfer signal in the timing adjustment.

7. (Once amended) An image processing method according to claim 6, wherein the operation step includes a storage step of successively storing a plurality of signals at different timings obtained by the photoelectric conversion.

8. (Once amended) An image processing method according to claim 7, wherein the operation step executes comparison operation for a combination of a plurality of ones of the signals stored by the storage step.

9. (Once amended) An image processing method according to claim 8, wherein the comparison operation includes an arithmetic operation for determining a maximum value or a minimum value of the signal.

10. (Once amended) An image processing method according to claim 6, wherein the outputting means outputs results of an arithmetic operation for each of the rows or the columns of said elements at a timing adjusted by the timing adjustment step.

11. (New) An image processing apparatus having an optical area in which a plurality of elements are disposed in a matrix, comprising:

light reception means for receiving light introduced into said elements of said optical area and photoelectrically converting the light; and

operation means including a plurality of operating units, each of which operates a signal obtained for one of said elements by the photoelectric conversion by said light reception means in accordance with a predetermined rule, the operation being based on at least one of a clear signal or a transfer signal;

wherein the operation of said operation means includes a plurality of modes that are selected based on a control signal other than the clear signal and the transfer signal.

12. (New) A method for processing images in an apparatus having an optical area in which a plurality of elements are disposed in a matrix, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving light introduced into the elements of the optical area and photoelectrically converting the light;

performing operation on a signal resulting from said photoelectric conversion and received by each of the elements, through a plurality of operating units in the element receiving the signal in accordance with a predetermined rule based on at least one of a clear signal or a transfer signal; and

outputting said operated signal in accordance with a plurality of modes that are selected based on a control signal other than the clear signal and the transfer signal.

13. (New) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said operation means performs an arithmetic operation.

14. (New) An image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the operation means stores and operates a plurality of photoelectrically converted signals received by one of said elements at predetermined timing intervals.

15. (New) An image processing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the operation means stores and operates the photoelectrically converted signals in the order in which the signals are received.